

# Smoke Signals



Members of Advisory Council at Broken Hill airport

## ►LANDS TRUST PROCLAIMED—

On 18th June, last, the Act of Parliament to establish the N.S.W. Aboriginal Lands Trust was gazetted. This is the final step following the Act's passage through parliament in April and its subsequent signing by the Governor. The Aborigines (Amendment) Act, 1973, as it is officially known, provides for the eventual transfer of ownership of Aboriginal reserves in New South Wales to a fully-elected Lands Trust, consisting of nine people chosen by the residents of New South Wales through a ballot. The same Act also provides for the restructuring of the present Aborigines Advisory Council so that it will be a fully elected body (previously three of its nine members were appointed by the Government). In accordance with the new Act the Director of Aboriginal Welfare, Mr Ian Mitchell, has stepped down as chairman. At a recent meeting the council chose as its new chairman Mr Tom Williams. Tom is pictured in the photo on this page. The picture was taken on the occasion of the arrival in Broken Hill of members of the Aborigines Advisory Council on their way to their meeting in Wilcannia. Those in the photo are from (l. to r.): Frank Wilson (Department of Child Welfare and Social Welfare, Broken Hill), Ian Mitchell (Director of Aboriginal Welfare), Ossie Cruse, Ken Dixon (Secretary to the Advisory Council), Bill Cohen, Tom Williams, Mrs Ivy Smith, and Mrs Muriel Stewart.

## ►ABORIGINAL CEMETERY MADE SECRET

An Aboriginal burial ground in South Australia has been declared a prohibited area and its location is to be kept secret from the general public. The area, near Blanchetown, 83 miles northeast of Adelaide, is considered to be of "profound scientific significance". Secrecy for the site is considered essential in order to protect it from possible damage by unsupervised visitors. The site is thought to have been occupied almost permanently from prehistoric times till after white settlement. The site could provide scientists with invaluable material on the traditional and ancient life-style and customs of its former residents. The burial ground was exposed during clearing in 1960. It contains in excess of 130 skeletons of the Ngaiawang tribe. The prohibition on unauthorized entry to the site was made under the South Australian Aboriginal and Historic Relics Preservation Act, 1967.

## ►GRANT FOR DARWIN DEVELOPMENT GROUP—

The Commonwealth Government has made a grant of \$27,000 to support the full-time operation of the Aboriginal Development Foundation in Darwin. The foundation, established in 1972 by a group of Aborigines, has a current membership of more than 200. The group's objective is to provide a community service for Aborigines who seek assistance from it. It will advise and assist on aspects of social welfare and assist in the development of business and self-help projects. The foundation also acts as a liaison and referral body between Aborigines and various government and non-government agencies. It aims to stimulate greater understanding between Aborigines and other ethnic groups. The grant will also enable the foundation to offer these services more effectively. Funds will be used for the salaries of three officers, including two community welfare workers, the rental and equipment of suitable premises and the purchase of a vehicle. It is intended that all employees would be Aboriginal, thus enabling Aborigines to take a direct part in their own affairs.

## ►CREDIT UNION FIELD OFFICERS—

Last December, *New Dawn* carried a report on the credit union established in Walgett. At that time it was said that the Australian Federation of Credit Union Leagues was to employ two Aboriginal field officers to spread the credit union movement among disadvantaged groups in the community to provide them with a system whereby pooling their financial resources such groups can help themselves.